

we always knew, and I have retold this story so many times. I am going to retell it again. You told us you could get in your car in Virginia, drive to West Virginia and back—and it takes about 8 hours—reciting poetry over and back without stopping and never recite the same poem twice. Think about that. Calculate it for a minute. How many people have read the Encyclopedia Britannica from cover to cover? Senator ROBERT BYRD. How many people have sat down when we have a break and read the dictionary? This man has done this. How many people can recite poetry as he did? I have just talked about this. How many people can recite Shakespeare verse after verse, passages out of Scripture?

Senator BYRD gave a series of speeches here, 10 speeches, each lasting for 1 hour. The subject was the line-item veto was going to ruin the Senate. The comparison was to the Roman Empire, the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Senator BYRD gave 10 speeches. When I was not able to listen personally, I listened to the recording. So tremendous were those speeches that the head of the political science department at UNV-LV, Dr. Randy Tuttle, taught a course on ROBERT BYRD based on these 10 speeches.

I asked Senator BYRD: You gave those speeches, you quit right on time, you had an hour set aside. How did you know when to stop?

He said: It was easy. I memorized all 10 of them.

When we met with the British parliamentarians, as I just recounted, in West Virginia, the blue grass music stopped, and Senator BYRD had staff pass out a little tablet and pencil to everybody. He said: If I make a mistake, write it down. And he proceeded to give us a demonstration of memory that I have never seen before, starting with the first ruler in Great Britain, the years the person served, the name, how to spell it, and very briefly what was accomplished during that period of time, from the beginning to the present Queen Elizabeth. Those parliamentarians were dumbfounded. How could an American do something they had never even thought about without a note?

There are some professors, I am sure, who are experts on ancient Rome, but I would tell all those academics, they don't have anything on the Senator from West Virginia as far as knowledge of the Roman Empire.

I consider myself so fortunate to have been able to serve in the Senate with ROBERT BYRD. And not only serve in the Senate with ROBERT BYRD, but all the time I have been here, I had the good fortune of serving on his Appropriations Committee.

The great Senator Daniel Webster said that ours:

... is a Senate of equals, of men of individual honor and personal character, and of absolute independence. We know no masters, we acknowledge no dictators. This is a hall for mutual consultation and discussion; not an arena for the exhibition of champions.

The prayer that was uttered today by Reverend Black, our Chaplain, says exactly what Daniel Webster said. That was a wonderful prayer, tremendously well done for this occasion. But I would say in response to the great Daniel Webster, there are champions among us. There are giants as well. I have served in public office a long time, but no one can dispute the fact, as far as I am concerned, that ROBERT BYRD is a giant.

I want him to know how much I appreciate all he has done for me. I care a great deal about this man. I love ROBERT BYRD. I love ROBERT BYRD. He is a person who sets a standard for all of us.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m., with each Senator permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to our distinguished colleague from West Virginia who, as the majority leader and the Democratic leader pointed out, celebrates today truly a momentous occasion, becoming the longest serving U.S. Senator in the history of our country.

Senator BYRD's record and achievements have been covered by the majority leader and the Democratic leader. I would like to make a few different observations.

When Senator BYRD came to this body in 1959, he was a member of a very large Democratic class. His party had had a very good day. It was the second term of President Eisenhower. In his class were such people as Eugene McCarthy and Tom Dodd and Phil Hart. Lyndon Baines Johnson was the leader of his party in the Senate at the time. In fact, Senator BYRD was accompanied to the well on his first day in office not by the senior Senator from his State, as is tradition, but by Majority Leader Johnson, his future mentor.

Shortly before the distinguished Senator from West Virginia got here, Majority Leader Johnson had appointed a committee to pick out the five greatest United States Senators in history. John F. Kennedy was appointed to be the head of that committee. After due deliberation, they picked out five Senators: Henry Clay from my State of Kentucky, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Robert La Follette, and Robert Taft. Those five Senators, who were designated as the five greatest Senators of all time, are depicted out here off the Senate Chamber in the waiting room.

Six or 8 years ago, we decided to consider adding two more to the list. I had the opportunity to be on a committee that reviewed the possibility of adding two more. We concluded there were two more who should be added, one Democrat and one Republican.

Our colleagues on the Democratic side picked Robert Wagner of New York, who was the author of most of President Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. After due deliberation, the Republicans on the committee, of which I was one, concluded that Arthur Vandenberg was the appropriate selection for us, based upon his willingness in the late 1940s to make the Truman containment policy, the Marshall plan, and other initiatives at the beginning of the Cold War that basically set out the strategy that we followed until the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. We thought that Arthur Vandenberg would be the appropriate one for us. So two more Senators were added—Arthur Vandenberg and Robert Wagner.

Today I think it is safe to predict that some day in the future, some Senate will decide to revisit the issue of what other great Senators might be added to this pantheon off the Senate floor that now includes seven United States Senators in our history. I think I can confidently predict that near the top of the list, if not at the top of the list, some day down the road will be the distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. President, today, June 12, 2006, is our good friend from West Virginia's 17,327th day in the Senate, making him the longest-serving Senator ever.

Senator ROBERT C. BYRD's first day as a Senator was January 3, 1959, when he was 41 years old. He is the 1,579th Senator. Some of his contemporaries were John Sherman Cooper, Hubert Humphrey, Everett Dirksen, John F. Kennedy, and Richard Russell.

Over his nearly 50 years of service here—he has been elected to eight full terms—Senator BYRD has served with 405 Senators, out of a total of 1,885 Senators who ever served. That is 21.5 percent of the total number. Over a fifth of all Senators who ever served can say they served with Senator BYRD.

And I add that Senator BYRD is only the second Senator ever to be elected to eight full terms.

As the Senators from two coal-producing States, Senator BYRD and I have worked together on a number of issues over the years to ensure that coal remains a safe, cheap, and plentiful source of energy, and that coal miners and their families can continue in this industry. Together we ensured that the Capitol complex would continue to be heated by coal. And we work together as members of the Appropriations Committee. I thank the Senator for his friendship over the years.

As astounding as the Senator from West Virginia's service in this body is, I must point out that he has even more experience representing the people of West Virginia. Senator BYRD served in the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1947 to 1950, the West Virginia Senate from 1951 to 1952, and the U.S. House of Representatives from 1953 to 1959. He was elected to his first office in 1946.

He was also elected assistant majority whip here in the Senate in 1965. In 1971, he was elected majority whip. I have heard that can be a tough job.

In 1977, Senator BYRD succeeded Senator Mike Mansfield as majority leader. He has also served as minority leader and Senate President pro tempore, meaning he has held every major position in the Senate.

After serving as majority and minority leader, Senator BYRD became chairman of the Appropriations Committee in 1989, and has been chairman or ranking member ever since. Our colleague from Alaska, the current Senate President pro tempore, has served with him on that committee since 1973.

Senator BYRD set the record for number of Senate votes cast at 12,134 on April 27, 1990, breaking a record set by Senator William Proxmire. He cast his 17,000th vote in March 2004, and continues to set the record every time he votes. As of the opening of the Senate today, he has cast 17,666 votes.

As his constituents in West Virginia know so well, Senator BYRD is the son of a coal miner. Before government service, he worked as a welder in wartime shipyards and as a meat cutter in a coal company town.

Senator BYRD is also an expert on Senate history. He wrote, with the assistance of Senate historian Richard Baker, a four-volume collection of history, speeches and statistics titled "The Senate" 1789-1989. He also wrote a history called "The Senate of the Roman Republic," and a 2005 autobiography titled "Child of the Appalachian Coalfields."

And my good friend from West Virginia is an accomplished fiddle player as well. He has performed on the television variety show "Hee Haw," at the Grand Ole Opry, and at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He even recorded an album called "Mountain Fiddler."

Senator BYRD earned his law degree from American University in 1963, while serving in the Senate. He attended night school while doing a full day's work here. President Kennedy presented him with his diploma and gave the commencement address.

President Kennedy received an honorary degree from American University at the ceremony. So he began his commencement address with these words:

President Anderson, members of the faculty, Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, my old colleague Senator Bob Byrd, who has earned his degree through many years of attending night law school while I am earning mine in the next thirty minutes, ladies and gentlemen . . .

In 1994, Senator BYRD was awarded his B.A. *summa cum laude* by Marshall University, which he had attended for one semester in 1951. He had earned A's in all his classes, but could not afford to continue. So he actually received his law degree before his bachelor's.

Senator BYRD is the first West Virginian in history to win all 55 of that State's counties in a statewide race. I

am sure many of his fellow West Virginians know of his knowledge and reverence for the Constitution, and that he always carries a copy in his left breast pocket.

Senator BYRD's legacy in this body is felt every day. Martin Gold, author of "Senate Procedure and Practice," wrote:

Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) is a giant in the field of parliamentary history and law. No Senator has had a greater impact on Senate rules and precedents.

And Michael Barone, in *The Almanac of American Politics*, said this of Senator BYRD:

Robert Byrd, the senior member of the United States Senate, may come closer to the kind of senator the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other.

Now, these comments from scholars are certainly to be respected. But I think Senator BYRD said it best at a spirited rally near the end of one of his recent campaigns for office. Senator BYRD said:

West Virginia has always had four friends: God Almighty, Sears Roebuck, Carter's Liver Pills and Robert C. Byrd.

Mr. President, Senator BYRD would be the first to tell us he could not have accomplished all he has without the love of his life, his partner, and his best friend—his wife, Erma Ora James Byrd. Erma passed away this March, 2 months shy of what would have been their 69th wedding anniversary.

The daughter of a coal miner, today would have been her 89th birthday. I am sure she is watching down on us from Heaven today as we honor her husband, the Senator from West Virginia.

Stories of enduring love are part of the history of any nation. ROBERT and ERMA were made for each other, and were together for nearly 69 years. Mr. President, I believe they are one of our Nation's great love stories.

I say to my friend and colleague from West Virginia, no one has had a greater career here. Your service is of great distinction. We all admire you very much, and we are here today to honor you on this most important occasion.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

The President pro tempore.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I join those who honor my great friend, our great friend, the Senator from West Virginia. This has been a tradition. Each time a Senator has reached the position where he has served longer than anyone else before, we have had tributes such as this. It is my honor to be here with my good friend today.

Having known Carl Hayden and Strom Thurmond, both of whom have the distinction that Senator BYRD has had in my lifetime and my service in the Senate, I believe he joins a small but distinguished group of dedicated public servants, people who have devoted their lives to serving our country.

I had the honor of being the whip for 8 years, 4 years in the minority and 4

years in the majority. I remember so well what I called the Byrd history lessons. Maybe Senator BYRD didn't call them that, but each evening in those days Senator BYRD would come to the floor and give another statement about the history of the Senate. I believe those became the framework for the volumes he has written on the history of the Senate. I didn't need to read them; I listened to them. As a matter of fact, I think I listened to every one the Senator made because the then majority leader, Howard Baker, would say to me: Teddy, it is your turn. I would be in the chair listening to Senator BYRD.

Winston Churchill once said:

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

I don't know anyone in my lifetime that I would say has given so much as Senator BYRD.

Others have talked about what he did before he came into public life. I know he attended college while he was in the West Virginia House of Delegates and State Senate and finished law school as a working Member of the Senate.

He has truly given more than he ever received. But, really, I would say of my friend from West Virginia that I know of no man who has done so much to make the Senate a family. When I first came here, that was one of the first things that Senator Mike Mansfield said to me—that you have to realize you are living in a family. This is a family. Senator BYRD has made that his sort of mantra, and to be the person who represents the family, reminding us that we are part of a family.

I remember so well, Senator BYRD, when you made such kind remarks about my wife Ann after she passed away in an aircraft accident. I also recall the days that you congratulated me on getting remarried, and then on the birth of our daughter Lily when, again, Senator BYRD took the floor. I will never forget the time you came to the floor and talked about the fact that my first grandchild had been born. Senator BYRD told me at that time that I had my first taste of immortality. Now that I have become the grandfather of 11 children, I have touched immortality a little bit more than most people perhaps. I stand in awe of the honor of being a grandfather. I will never forget what he said. That means you are going to go one generation beyond the generation you helped bring into the world. You have seen your children produce children, and that really matches your love for the Senate family.

I don't know of anybody here who has had a sorrow or an achievement when Senator BYRD hasn't taken the time to seek us out and either commiserate with us in our sorrow or tell us what a great achievement it was. It is a great achievement to be part of the Senate family and to be nurturing our own families.

Others have spoken about your dear wife Erma. I know how close the two of

you were. I know that because of conversations we have had about Erma. We were all saddened when she passed away earlier this year, but I know she is looking down on you today, Senator BYRD. I know she is proud of your service and, if she were here, she would be right up there in the gallery. But she is up there somewhere looking at all of us.

Actually, many of you may not know this, but I met Senator BYRD during the Eisenhower administration. I remember sitting in the gallery the day you were sworn into the Senate in 1959. You were already in the House. When I got to the Senate, I was talking to the wife of Bob Bartlett, my predecessor, the Senator's good friend. I was told that the one person in the Senate I could trust would be BOB BYRD. Coming from her, that meant a great deal to me personally. We have worked together for 35 years now on the Appropriations Committee. I wish I could count the days when we were chairmen; when Senator BYRD was chairman, I would wander over to his room, and when I was chairman, he would come to my room. I remember one day—and he will not like this—he came over and said someone had given him some cigars, and he suggested that we ought to smoke a cigar. I had not smoked a cigar in 20 years, but I said it would be a good idea. When Senator BYRD makes a suggestion, it is a good idea. I joined him then. About 6 months later, I had somebody give me a couple of cigars, and I wandered over to Senator BYRD's office and said, "Let's share a cigar again." Senator BYRD said, "I have quit."

I was on that trip to London, too, at the British Parliamentary Conference, and in West Virginia when Senator BYRD was the host. I don't know if you know this, Senator.

I have a video of you when we were in London when we sat around, those Members of the American Senate who were there, after meeting with our colleagues from Britain, and we talked and you told us about your own history. I remember that so well. I remember asking you to recite the poem about your dog. We talk about this prodigious memory of Senator BYRD. I have never known anything that I could ask him to recite that he didn't have the ability to recite.

Having been here so long together, I come back to where I started. You have kept alive the spirit of family in this Senate. I think without the spirit of family, we would lose the essence of what it is to be here. I tell people that sometimes I sort of pinch myself to realize that I really am a Member of the Senate. Others can talk about their backgrounds. I don't talk about mine very much, but I certainly never had any reason to believe I would ever be standing here, and I think Senator BYRD could say the same thing.

We are here to honor the son of West Virginia, the patriarch of our Senate family. He is, as Senator MCCONNELL

said, a symbol of our history. I am here to thank you, Senator, for being a good friend. I think you have been one of the best friends I have had in the Senate, and you have really sustained me in times of sorrow and encouraged me in times of joy. I am here to honor you for your service; it is a great service. But mostly I am here because I am honored to be able to call you my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, this is truly a unique day in the life of the Senate, with the spotlight shining on Senator ROBERT BYRD in recognition of an enormous achievement, being the longest serving Senator in the history of the body. It is a remarkable achievement.

Senator BYRD started his political career with an election in 1946, 60 years ago, and is still going strong. He served in the Senate at the same time that Harry S. Truman was President of the United States.

Just think about that for moment. This is a man whose service has spanned the Presidencies of President Truman, President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, President Johnson, President Nixon, President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton, and President Bush. It is quite an accolade. And Senator BYRD accurately states that he hasn't served under any President, however, he has served with Presidents. He is a scholar and devotee of the doctrine of separation of powers, something which seems to have been forgotten lately. But when the issue arose as to the line-item veto and the constitutional amendment for the balanced budget, Senator BYRD has been vociferous in defending the prerogatives of the Congress of the United States. He even goes so far from time to time to remind people that article I of the Constitution is for the Congress. You don't get to the executive branch until you get to article II. You don't get to the judicial branch until article III. In many ways the Supreme Court has rewritten the sequence of the Constitution taking primacy. There is an effort on the expansion of Executive power, but Senator BYRD is the bulwark for separation of powers. To think that he was here when Jack Kennedy was here, as well as when Lyndon Baines Johnson was here—about whom so much has been written as the master of the Senate. There will be a sequel to that, and it will be about BOB BYRD. Senator BYRD was here when great men like Lyndon Johnson and Jack Kennedy strode these corridors for so many years. It is an enormous slice of history.

As a newcomer to the Senate, I watched Senator BYRD very closely. There is a lot to be learned from Senator BYRD. Senator BYRD was chairman of the Appropriations Committee when I was one of the younger members of the Appropriations Committee. One day, I thought Senator BYRD's alloca-

tions didn't match the budget resolution and I told him. It is sort of untoward to disagree with the chairman. I saw a magnanimity in Senator BYRD to listen to one of the younger Senators. I even called for a vote. The vote was 26 to 3. People said it was a great accomplishment to get two other Senators to join me, Alfonse D'Amato and Bob Kasten. We only lost 26 to 3, but it was considered a victory, which is a testament to Senator BYRD's power.

Senator BYRD said to me on that day: Some day, you will be chairman of the Appropriations Committee and you can make the allocations. I thought it entirely farfetched at that time that I would ever be chairman of the Appropriations Committee, but it may happen. I am next in line behind Senator THAD COCHRAN. It will be quite a formidable challenge because Senator BYRD continues to be ranking Democrat on the committee. To come up against this titan, this legend, he will probably do more to make the allocations if, as, and when I become chairman.

Senator BYRD has been a master tactician. I recall one early morning, about 3 a.m., when we Republicans were carrying on a filibuster. I believe it was on campaign finance reform. Senator Dole gathered us all together in a remote spot and said: Guys, don't show up on the Senate floor. Make Senator BYRD maintain a quorum.

For those who don't know the Senate rules, they are sufficiently complicated and we would not expect C-SPAN II watchers to know, if anybody is watching on C-SPAN II. But you have to have a quorum on the floor to conduct business, or somebody can suggest the absence of a quorum, and it just stops. So Senator BYRD had this idea about having some Republicans on the floor. Knowing the rules as he did, he directed the Sergeant at Arms to execute warrants of arrest for absent Senators. I have never seen this in my long tenure. Remember that, Senator BYRD?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, I do.

Mr. SPECTER. Now we have confirmation. I have called a witness here. The Sergeant at Arms was a little fellow, Henry Giugni. He started to patrol the halls. He came upon Senator Lowell Weicker. Now, Henry was about 5-foot-4, and Lowell Weicker was 6-foot-4. Lowell was at his fighting weight of about 240 at the time. It was about 3:30 in the morning. Do you know what happens with Senators at 3:30 in the morning? I won't say on the Senate floor. The Sergeant at Arms decided not to arrest Lowell Weicker. He made a very wise judgment. Instead, he went knocking on Senate doors. Senator Robert Packwood made the mistake of answering the door. Senator Packwood compelled them to carry him out of his office. He agreed to walk here, but he insisted on being carried into the Senate Chamber. I don't think Senator BYRD got his quorum, but he got his man, Senator Packwood.

I once had the temerity to engage Senator BYRD in a debate. I have

watched Senator BYRD very closely when he would control the floor with the parliamentary maneuver of getting unanimous consent before yielding the floor, which gave him the right to the floor.

I had read the rule book, and Senator BYRD contended that he could do that without unanimous consent if there had been no objection. I thought I had watched him with the rules to the contrary and engage him in a lengthy debate. I did not win that debate, but it was a great learning experience.

Senator BYRD commanded the floor with great authority. In the old days, we used to have sessions that went all night. Senator BYRD was sitting in that chair, and he rose at about 12:18 a.m.—this is another true story; you get very few true stories out of Washington. We were all enervated. Some of us were even tired, but not BOB BYRD. He rose from his chair and he said: I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as long as I choose.

A Senator in this chair, whom I will not identify, rose as if to object. Senator BYRD looked at him as if his eyes like were laser beams, and the Senator sat down. Past midnight, Senator BYRD had unanimous consent to speak as long as he chose. It wasn't too long, but it was a great display of fortitude and authority.

My final comment about Senator BYRD is about the debates we have had on constitutional law. His scholarship on the institution is unparalleled, and that is a record which will never be broken. It is pretty hard to say "never," but when one looks at the volumes of his work, when one looks at the magnitude of his speeches—he used to speak every Friday afternoon for as long as he liked. He spoke to an empty Chamber, but he spoke to a full history book.

Senator BYRD once said to me that if he became President, he would make me his Attorney General. May the RECORD show that Senator BYRD is nodding in the affirmative, and Senator BYRD, if you become President, I expect you to live up to that promise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate my good friend, Senator ROBERT BYRD, on becoming the longest serving Senator in the history of our great Nation. Senator BYRD has now served as Senator for 17,327 days. That is almost as long as I have been alive. I fully expect to continue serving with him for many more days.

I know that during those 17,000-plus days in the Senate, Senator BYRD has inspired many. I also know that as we continue to witness his service in the days ahead in the Senate, he will continue to provide inspiration to this body and to all of my colleagues and to me. I am sure that in those days, just as he has in the past, Senator BYRD will continue to implore our colleagues to respect the wisdom of the Founders

and the brilliance of our Constitution, which he so proudly carries as a symbol on his lapel every day, and during those days in the future, he will continue to remind us all in the Senate of how much we can and should learn from the history of our great country and the experience of this democracy.

He will continue, as he always has, fighting for the hard-working people of his beloved West Virginia, and he will, as he always has, continue to provide generous counsel to those of us who have far less experience than he does, for Senator BYRD truly has been and continues to be a mentor to all of us, and always, with his grace and with his dignity, setting an example for all Senators to act with that dignity, with that courtesy, and with that eloquence which is truly a legacy of ROBERT BYRD in the Senate. For me, as the No. 99 Senator and as one of the most junior in this body today, I am personally inspired and grateful to Senator BYRD for his achievements and for his example.

Just as my family has given me strength in my life, I know Senator BYRD's remarkable service would not have been possible without the love and support of his own family. I have often been moved by Senator BYRD's words about the power of the love and the bond he and his late wife Erma shared for decades. So as we honor Senator BYRD today, as we honor this institution, we also honor the memory of Erma, and we honor the rest of Senator BYRD's family as well.

It is a great privilege for me to represent the people of Colorado in this great Chamber. It is also a true honor to be a colleague to a historic figure in the name of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia.

Once again, I congratulate him.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues who came to the floor earlier today to mark a historic milestone. It isn't just a milestone for one man, it is a milestone for our Senate and our Nation.

Today our colleague, ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia, who just left the Chamber, becomes the longest serving Senator in the history of the United States of America. Today marks Senator BYRD's 17,327th day in office; that is 47 years, 5 months, 1 week, and 2 days spent in service in the Senate on behalf of his beloved people of the State of West Virginia.

Many of us know Senator BYRD's impressive official biography. He has held more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Senator in our history, including 6 years as Senate majority

leader, 6 years as minority leader, twice Senator BYRD has served as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and twice he has been elected by his colleagues as President pro tempore, a position that places him third in line to the Presidency of the United States.

In many ways, Senator BYRD's life is the story of the 20th century of America. He started from the most humble origins and has risen to the greatest heights, and he has done this not on the backs of others but by the sweat of his brow and the power of his massive intellect.

To me, one of the most impressive facts about Senator BYRD is that he studied for his law degree while he was serving as a Member of Congress. He would make law by day and study it at night. True to form, Senator BYRD not only earned his doctorate of jurisprudence from American University in 1963, it was awarded cum laude.

Senator BYRD may also be one of the last great orators in the U.S. Senate, and whether the topic is the war in Iraq or the Peloponnesian War, the basic ingredients of a great speech are always present in Senator BYRD's address: clear, substantive thinking and the rhetorical skills to effectively express it.

For Senator BYRD, noble purposes are foremost as his motive and objective. He doesn't take the easy road, and he doesn't pander. When President Bill Clinton signed the line-item veto into law in 1996, it was immediately challenged in court by a group of six Senators, the first of whom, of course, was Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. Senator BYRD, though loyal to his party and loyal to his President, was loyal first to his view of the Constitution. He believed the law was unconstitutional and concentrated too much power in the executive branch of Government. Ultimately, the Supreme Court agreed with Senator BYRD and disagreed with the Congress and the President who enacted the law.

Almost 10 years later, Senator BYRD took to the floor of the Senate, speaking out and facing the wrath of popular sentiment in opposing the invasion of Iraq. At the time, it wasn't easy for him to vote no, nor was it a comfortable decision to defend at home, but Senator BYRD didn't shrink from the challenge—he never has—and he did something which has become quite rare in American politics: He stood up and led. He said that of all the thousands of votes he has cast—more than 17,000 to be exact—that vote opposing the war in Iraq is the one in which he takes the greatest pride.

I might add just parenthetically, I share that sentiment. In this case, too, I believe ultimately history will prove all of us right who voted no on the use of force in Iraq.

Senator BYRD has an unquenchable willingness to serve, a willingness to lead and carry the burdens and responsibilities of leadership. Above all else,

he has done these things while continuing to be a truly honorable man. When all is said and done, the most important words that will be spoken about ROBERT C. BYRD will not be that he was a great speaker or great statesman or great U.S. Senator—he is certainly all of that—the true measure of this man will not be found in recounting the number of days he has served in this body; rather, it will be found in his strength of character and in his integrity.

That character and integrity are evidenced in so many ways: his love of his beloved late wife Erma. He was such a devoted husband and partner. Even as she suffered serious illness in the last years and months of her life, he never left her side. To his children and grandchildren, he remains a loving father, a caring grandfather, and a wise teacher. To his friends, he is a man whose word can always be counted on. To his country, he is a leader who found power only in the commitment to service. And to his State, he is a shining example of the very best that is in all of us.

I am honored to be counted as one of those who call ROBERT C. BYRD a friend, and I know this about my friend: Today he marks a milestone that no other Senator in the history of the United States has marked, but his success will be measured in terms of his faithfulness to the people who placed him here and the trust of the people of West Virginia. They have never been betrayed by this great man.

Although he has risen to the highest levels of power, he has never forgotten where he comes from, who sent him, and what his mission is.

If my colleagues will allow me two personal observations about Senator BYRD and to tell two stories that I think really are symbols of his view of the world and the great power of his intellect. One of the first involved a debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate about the National Endowment for the Arts. It occurred a few years ago. A Senator on the other side of the aisle offered an amendment to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts with the argument that there were art displays or exhibits that were being funded with Federal dollars that were embarrassing. This Senator went on to argue that it really made no sense for us to subsidize the arts in America because they were out of the reach of the common man and we should allow the patrons of the arts, those private benefactors, to take care and not our Government.

I came to the floor to argue against that position, telling the story of how my immigrant mother used to take me in the car across the bridge to the art museum in St. Louis, this woman with an eighth grade education, to show me works of art and talk about artists she knew very little about but wanted to learn more about. As I was telling my story, I saw Senator BYRD come on to the floor, and I assumed he was coming to talk about some other issue, but he

asked for recognition. He stood here at his desk, as he has so many times, and completely enthralled this Chamber as he told the story of his simple life in West Virginia where he was orphaned and raised by other members of the family and how one fine day, his new stepfather took him out and bought him a fiddle. With that fiddle, he started taking music lessons and developed a passion for music. He talked about what music and the arts meant to him growing up as a poor boy in a small town in West Virginia. It was a classic ROBERT C. BYRD moment, taking a chapter in his life from many years ago and bringing it to application today.

The second experience I recall is one that I have told over and over to friends in Illinois. If I hadn't been there to see it, I would not have believed it. It goes back to the days when I was a Member of the House of Representatives on the Appropriations Committee. Senator BYRD, a leader in the Senate, had a Transportation appropriations bill that passed the Senate that had several noteworthy projects for his State of West Virginia. A Republican Senator across the Rotunda took exception to these earmarks for the State of West Virginia and vowed that when he came to conference between the Senate and the House, he would take out these projects for the State of West Virginia. They were excessive, in his view. He was interviewed by several news media, including *The Washington Post*.

The day of the great confrontation took place just a couple floors—one floor below us in the appropriations conference room. It is a long room with a huge table. The Senate conferees sit on one side of the table. Senator Mark Hatfield was then chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, of which Senator BYRD was a member, and I sat on the other side of the table with House Appropriations Committee members, waiting for this classic, historic confrontation between Senator ROBERT C. BYRD and his critic from the House of Representatives. It was interesting because as we all sat down, there was one chair that was left empty. Directly across the table from his House critic was the empty chair Senator BYRD would occupy. The moment came when finally the House member was recognized, and he stood up and with a lengthy speech took exception to the fact that Senator BYRD was putting these projects in for the State of West Virginia. When he finished and had exhausted himself—no one interrupted him—and sat down, Senator BYRD asked for recognition in this appropriations conference room.

I am going to get a few of these facts wrong because I didn't write them down. Senator BYRD would never get them wrong. But I trust that at the end of the story, you will understand what happened that day.

Senator BYRD reflected for a moment, as he often does, looking to the ceiling, and then he spoke. He said: In

1830, Daniel Webster wrote his famous letter to Mr. Hayne. And then he paused, and Senator BYRD said: If my memory serves me, it was January that he wrote the letter. January the 28th, Senator BYRD said. And if I am not mistaken, he said, it was a Thursday. And he went on to explain how Webster wrote the letter to Hayne explaining the basics of our Constitution, explaining that in the House of Representatives, a State as small as West Virginia doesn't stand a chance with a limited population and very little political power to get things done; the State of West Virginia has to rely on the Senate, where every State has two Senators. And if he, ROBERT C. BYRD, didn't stand up for his small State of West Virginia in the Senate, who would? What chance would a small State have?

It was the classic argument that really was the foundation for the creation of Congress. Senator BYRD that day won the argument, won his case before the conference committee.

I thought at the time, years before I was elected to the Senate, I wish I had a videotape of that moment. That was one of those great moments which I have seen here in the Congress. So when I came to the Senate a few years later, I went up to Senator BYRD and I said to him: I will never forget that day when you had the debate in the appropriations conference committee about the projects for West Virginia and how you not only recalled the exchange between Daniel Webster and Mr. Hayne and the historical and constitutional significance, you not only recalled the year and the day, but you recalled the day of the week it occurred. I said: When you said, "I believe it was a Thursday," I was just absolutely amazed. Senator BYRD reflected for a moment, and he said: Well, I believe it was a Thursday. I said: I am not questioning you; no, I am not questioning you; I am just telling you that I thought that detail brought more to that debate than anyone could imagine.

So as luck would have it, 2 hours later, we had a vote on the floor here, and Senator BYRD at this desk called me over. I came over to his desk, and he said: Senator DURBIN, I was almost certain it was a Thursday, and I asked my staff to pull out a perpetual calendar, and if you will look here, January 28, 1820, was, in fact, a Thursday. I said: I never doubted you for a moment.

I have heard him stand on the floor reciting poetry at length. I have heard him recount the debates of this Senate and the history of this Nation in the type of detail that puts all the rest of us to shame. He is truly not just an institution of West Virginia, not just an institution of the Senate; he is a national treasure. He brings to debate in this Chamber—what little debate we have anymore—a certain gravity, a certain importance that reminds us

why we are here, that we have been fortunate enough to be called by the people who vote in our States to be one of the few men and women to serve in this great Chamber, and in serving, we not only represent them, we represent a long line of history, of great men and women who have had this opportunity to serve in the U.S. Senate.

Today, of course, is recognition of his special place in the history of our Nation and in the history of the Senate: 17,327 days in office—47 years, 5 months, 1 week, and 2 days—not only witnessing the parade of history but being such a major part of it.

Senator BYRD, I salute you and your service to the people of West Virginia and this Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have been very much looking forward to this moment.

First, I ask unanimous consent that an article which appeared in the Charleston Gazette on June 12, 2006, be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, this article embraces the comments of many dear friends of the Senator, and I say with some humility, a few of my own comments as well.

I think back to reminisce on the 28 years that I have been privileged to have represented the Commonwealth of Virginia in this Chamber.

There is no single individual for whom I have greater reverence or respect than my dear friend, the senior Senator from West Virginia. We were bonded together early on. When I arrived here, he sought me out, and I sought him out because our two great States at one time, were one State, the State of Virginia. But now, even though we are two States, our states have so many issues in common.

How many times Senator BYRD and I have come to this floor with regard to the subject of the coal miners, their safety, their ability to operate and provide that essential component to America's energy needs, coal; how dangerous is the profession, how much we respect their families and other ones who share the risk that the miners take every day.

Then, more specifically, I remember so well how we have worked together all of these many years in support of clean-coal-burning technology.

Coal is the largest single reserve of energy that this Nation possesses—the largest, far beyond petroleum, far beyond natural gas, far beyond the other renewables, and so forth. Coal is there. Our research and industrial base works year after year to try to see how we can consume these vast coal reserves and thereby become less and less dependent on importing our energy needs, but burning it in such a way that it does the least possible harm to the environment, be it the air we

breathe or the problems associated with acid rain, and so forth.

I commend my dear friend for all the work that he has done and will continue to do for years on clean coal technology.

Virginia and West Virginia also share a common border that is basically established by the Appalachian Mountains. This part of Virginia and West Virginia has its own magnificent qualities, particularly the sturdy lifestyle of the people who choose purposefully to live in those hills and valleys and those mountains which are so often ravaged by heavy floods and so often ravaged by other natural disasters, such as snowstorms.

Senator BYRD and I many times have gone to visit those regions in the aftermath of a natural disaster. We find no desire on the part of those people to leave those regions, only to remain.

Senator BYRD was instrumental in passing legislation which provides recognition for those geographic areas of the Appalachian range that are deserving of financial assistance and other forms of assistance because of the rigorous, challenging lifestyle in these regions. He has seen that funding has remained these many years equitably allocated between the several States.

I think of him foremost as one who is a family man. How often he has reminisced about the members of his family. He speaks with a great sense of pride and humility on how his family, much like every Member of this Senate, is closely involved in the life of the Senate, closely involved because of the commitments the families make: the many long hours Senators are required to either be in the Chamber or traveling throughout their States, traveling throughout the 50 States, or, indeed, around the world. It is a challenge for the families, and BOB BYRD is a family man, along with his beloved wife Erma.

I remember so well early on in my career, I had the privilege to be invited by Senator BYRD, to join him on a number of codels to various parts of the world. We served together on the Senate Committee on Armed Services these many years. So often we would visit the troops and others throughout the world.

One trip I remember ever so vividly, he took the first congressional codel to the then-Soviet Union to visit with Gorbachev, who had risen to a powerful position in the Soviet Union after a lot of strife and turmoil. That man exhibited extraordinary courage. I so looked forward to our important visit, as did every member of that codel—I think there were about a dozen of us who joined Senator BYRD to go over to the Soviet Union.

Senator Strom Thurmond, whose record Senator BYRD, with a sense of humility, passes today, was on that codel. And as we flew to the Soviet Union, I had the privilege—and maybe with one or two others—of working with BOB BYRD on remarks he wanted

to make. That was an important set of remarks. Strom Thurmond represented the Republican side of that delegation. We were basically equally divided. I remember working through that statement well into the wee hours of the night as that plane was traversing that long distance.

The following day, Gorbachev announced he was going to allocate an hour and a half time to meet this delegation. The time was carefully allocated by Senator BYRD and Senator Thurmond to members of the delegation.

I recall that I was the junior man on that delegation. When he got to me, I had 2 minutes. I was proud to get 2 minutes. Our dear colleague and friend, the retiring Senator this year, Senator SARBANES, senior, of course, to me at that time, turned to me and said: I will give you my 3 minutes so you can have 5 minutes because you are on that Committee on Armed Services, and there is nothing more important to be covered today than the issues relating to national defense. I will never forget that act of courtesy by Senator SARBANES.

Senator BYRD delivered his remarks flawlessly. Gorbachev listened very carefully. Gorbachev made a few notes on a pad. He was followed, then, by Strom Thurmond, who delivered one of his thunderous, heartfelt remarks, beginning with how he stormed the shore on D-Day and how the Soviet Army was pressing on Germany from another direction. It was a confluence of primarily those two forces and Great Britain and, of course, their allies and the free French who brought a conclusion to the war. Gorbachev's father had been in the war. Strom reminisced, jokingly saying that he hoped he had not hurt his father. I recall Gorbachev very much was moved by that comment.

That was the type of thing for which Senator BYRD was so famous: putting together those delegations, going to those places in the world around which the axle of history was evolving at that time, or the spokes of history around that axle. What a privilege it was to travel with this great man.

I think of him as a historian. This Senator does not have the temerity, and I don't know of anyone who would challenge BOB BYRD on the history of this great institution. No man hath greater love for this Senate than ROBERT BYRD. He has expressed that with a sense of humility many times in speeches in the Senate.

When he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a copy of the Constitution—he almost knows it by heart—he always opens that little book. He can, as quickly as anyone in this Senate, find those passages that are relevant to the debate at hand or the issues at hand. Those are things we remember about him with such great respect.

He is a humorist. He can be tough. He can be firm. But, oh, can he bring a chuckle about in the hearts of all of us.

Sometimes in this Senate when things hit the high point of stress, I have seen BOB BYRD take to the floor with his very soft voice, dispel tension, dispel some of the rancor, and inject a note of humor.

BOB BYRD is also, it might surprise Members, an artist. One painting he did many years ago, some of us through the years have been privileged to get a copy of that painting. He has an eye for art. He also has an eye for music. I do recall the times when he played the fiddle, the music that he loved and still loves. I think he composed a little bit on the side from time to time.

I can recount so many things where he is far more capable than I. I have never considered myself a poet, but BOB BYRD can recall from memory hundreds of poems and recite them at times when it seems most appropriate.

He is a family man, historian, humorous, artist, musician, composer, poet, and then we think back always to his respect for the Bible, and second only to the Bible, his respect and love for the United States Constitution.

I went back and checked a little history. This Chamber honored me the other night after I cast my 10,000th vote, a very modest accomplishment in the face of BOB BYRD's accomplishment, my 28 years. He has been here just short of twice as long.

Also, someone thoughtfully said that I was the second longest serving Senator from Virginia. Lo and behold, who was the longest serving Senator from Virginia? None other than BOB BYRD's close friend of years past, Harry F. Byrd, Sr. I repeat, senior, because when I came to the Senate, Harry F. Byrd, Jr., was the Member of the Senate with whom I was privileged to serve as his junior Senator. But it is interesting, Harry F. Byrd, Sr., was born in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, WV. There you have it. He was the longest serving Senator and remains with that record at 32 years and 8 months for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Now BOB BYRD takes it not only for the State but for the whole of the history of the Senate.

There has to be something, I say most respectfully, in the water down in West Virginia, or the lifestyle, the hardiness, or the courage of the people that enabled these two distinguished Virginians, ROBERT C. BYRD and Harry Flood Byrd, Sr., to become the longest serving in their respective States.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Charleston (WV) Gazette, June 12, 2006]

THE PILLAR OF THE SENATE: 10 PRESIDENTS LATER, BYRD LONGEST-SERVING SENATOR (By Paul J. Nyden)

Sen. Robert C. Byrd becomes the longest-serving member of the U.S. Senate today, having represented West Virginians for 17,327 days in the chamber.

Byrd began serving in the Senate more than 47 years ago, on Jan. 3, 1959, after spending six years in the House of Representatives and six years in the West Virginia Legislature.

He also has cast more votes by far than any member of the Senate: 17,662 times, as of last Friday.

"I consider him to be the pillar of the Senate," says Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md. "His commitment to the United States Senate and its history, customs and procedures is equaled only by his commitment to the state of West Virginia, our nation and our Constitution."

Byrd's impact on fellow senators personally rivals his institutional role, some of his colleagues said.

"Senator Byrd has been a very, very important figure in my life," said Sen. John Warner, a Virginia Republican. "He is such a magnificent teacher of the history the Senate."

Warner recalls a conversation he had with Byrd when Warner was new to the Senate. "He said, 'At one time, our states were together. I don't want to put them back together, but I want to work together as full and equal partners,'" Warner said.

"I enjoy the man," Warner said. "He is wonderful."

Up to now, the Senate's longest-serving member had been the late Strom Thurmond, R-S.C. The third- and fourth-longest-serving members are Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., and Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, both of whom have been there more than 43 years.

"Byrd epitomizes the role that the framers of our Constitution envisioned for the legislative branch," Sarbanes said.

In fact, *The Almanac of American Politics*, a widely consulted volume on federal politics, describes Byrd as the politician who "may come closer to the kind of senator the Founding Fathers had in mind than any other."

Since President Bush took office, Byrd has been one of the Senate's leading voices on challenging the war in Iraq, preserving Social Security and protecting workers' jobs and safety.

Despite his strong positions, however, Byrd said he regrets the increasing animosity in both legislative bodies. He said he has always worked to be bipartisan.

"I thank the people of West Virginia for having repeatedly expressed their faith in me," Byrd said. "I never lose sight of that. Every morning of every day of my life, my first thought is, 'What can I do today for West Virginia?'"

Byrd's contribution to the state has been immense, said Gov. Joe Manchin and members of West Virginia's congressional delegation.

"I don't know of a person in West Virginia who has not been touched, or benefited in a most positive way, by Senator Byrd's service," Manchin said. "I mean, Democrats, Republicans, independents and people who don't vote—they all benefit."

Byrd has long been known as a "legend" in West Virginia, said Jay Rockefeller, Byrd's junior Democratic colleague for the state. "But now he has surpassed even the great legends of the Senate to become the longest serving senator in U.S. history."

He can take credit for "highways, dams, bridges, federal facilities and jobs, health centers and educational institutions," Rockefeller said. "And the best part is, he's not finished."

"What do you get when you multiply the power of the beacon by the strength of a workhorse by the steadiness of an anchor? Robert C. Byrd," said Rep. Nick J. Rahall, D-W.Va.

Byrd's "ability to deliver for our state" is awe-inspiring, said David Hardesty, the president of West Virginia University. "His votes are guided by his understanding of the Constitution and by his dedication to the people of this state."

Manchin also emphasized Byrd's future.

"People also need to know that Senator Byrd has a lot of years of service left in

him," he said. "When people ask about what he has done, he says, 'I want to talk about people who can help me do what we still need to do.'"

Born in Wilkesboro, N.C., in 1917, Byrd grew up in a coal mining family in Sophia, Raleigh County.

Nearly 20 years later, he married Erma Ora James, who passed away on March 25 of this year. Today, Mrs. Byrd would have turned 89.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is an extraordinary honor to be able to speak a few words about my friend, the senior Senator from the State of West Virginia, as he makes history yet again.

There are precious few opportunities in life to recognize greatness in our midst, but today we have that opportunity. We honor our friend not simply because he's become the longest-serving Senator in our history, but also because there's no doubt that he's earned his rightful place besides Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John Calhoun, and other giants in Senate history.

BOB BYRD's life is a tribute to the power of the American dream—rising from humble beginnings, this son of the Appalachian coal fields reached the pinnacle of power and accomplishment through decades of hard work and unwavering dedication.

His life is also a tribute to the power of love and commitment. BOB BYRD's commitment and love for the Senate and the country is total and complete, just as they are for the people of West Virginia and his beloved Erma, with whom he shared one of America's great love stories.

Erma and BOB would have celebrated her birthday today—and we're saddened that she could not be here to share this extraordinary moment. But we know she's looking down from heaven with a smile for the young boy who once shared his chewing gum with her more than 70 years ago.

This is a special day for me as well, because it's a time to tell my friend how much he means to me, and how much I believe his service means to our Nation.

For longer than I've been in public life, I've known ROBERT C. BYRD. I first came to know him during the famed West Virginia Presidential primary of 1960.

BOB was a new Senator and moving up through the ranks as a protege of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson. My brother Jack and BOB were colleagues in the Senate, but Jack knew it was inevitable that BOB would be looking out for LBJ in the Mountain State, and hoping to deny us the victory we needed.

Jack had won the Wisconsin primary, and the stakes were high in West Virginia.

It was a spirited campaign in which all of us in the Kennedy family got to see the extraordinary qualities of the people of West Virginia—kindness, compassion for their fellow citizens, and perseverance even in the face of enormous obstacles—the qualities that BOB BYRD knew and loved. Jack campaigned extremely well in the state and

came love the people too, and he never forgot the boost they gave him during that hard-fought campaign.

President Kennedy and ROBERT C. BYRD formed a powerful partnership, and one of Jack's first official acts in office was to authorize the shipment of emergency rations to help the people of Appalachia recover from a disaster.

They worked together to create the Appalachian Regional Commission, which lifted thousands out of poverty, and eliminated many of the barriers that had isolated the region from the economic mainstream of the Nation. They invested in the people, and it worked. President Kennedy and Senator ROBERT C. BYRD understood that if you give Americans opportunity and hope, there is no limit to what they can accomplish.

For me personally, it's impossible to imagine the Senate without Senator BYRD. He defeated me for Majority Whip in 1971. We both thought we had the votes lined up to win, and it was BOB who taught me how to count votes as he went on to become an outstanding Whip and later an outstanding Majority Leader. My consolation prize was being set free to focus on the legislative issues I care most about.

Over the years in the Senate together, we've all come to rely on Senator BYRD as the great defender of this institution and the champion of the Constitution.

He doesn't defend the Constitution simply when it's in fashion to do so. He doesn't yield when political convenience suggests that the Legislative Branch should demur for the sake of comity or to accomplish a popular goal.

BOB BYRD understands that the founders intended each branch of government to have powers that could place them in conflict, and that the powers Congress cedes to the executive today may have dire consequences for the Nation tomorrow.

In this role, he is the guardian of the Senate and the ideals that Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton fought to enshrine when they created our government.

I have many warm memories of BOB BYRD as leader, as friend, and as scholar. One that comes to mind now is our barnstorming trip through West Virginia during the 2004 Presidential campaign.

We traveled by bus around the state from Charleston to Mingo and Logan counties and wherever we stopped, you could feel the love and respect that the people of West Virginia had for BOB BYRD. At one stop, he even jumped up onto the back of a flatbed truck to deliver a stemwinder. I was committed to the campaign as well, but that was a tactic I thought best be left to BOB.

In the end we came up short in the West Virginia on election day, but I'll never forget the fun we had those last few weeks of October, and I'm eternally grateful to BOB for inviting me. I'll cherish the memory forever.

Of all the remarkable attributes of Senator BYRD, few have impressed more than his ability to memorize and recite poetry. As a child, this was always one of my greatest challenges at school and I'm awed by BOB's extraordinary talent.

His mind must hold hundreds of verses that he can recite at a moment's notice. One of my favorites describes the responsibilities we have as public servants to address the causes of the problems that confront us, not just the consequences of those problems.

It's about whether it's better to build a fence around the edge of a cliff, or keep an ambulance ready in the valley below.

I can't recite it from memory like he can, but this is how it goes. It was written by Joseph Malins in 1895:

Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;

But over its terrible edge there had slipped
A duke, and full many a peasant.

The people said something would have to be done,
But their projects did not at all tally.
Some said "Put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff,"

Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."
The lament of the crowd was profound and was loud,
As the tears overflowed with their pity;

But the cry for the ambulance carried the day
As it spread through the neighbouring city.
A collection was made, to accumulate aid,
And the dwellers in highway and alley

Gave dollars or cents—not to furnish a fence—
But an ambulance down in the valley.
"For the cliff is all right if you're careful," they said;

"And if folks ever slip and are dropping,
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much
As the shock down below—when they're stopping."

So for years (we have heard), as these mishaps occurred
Quick forth would the rescuers sally,
To pick up the victims who fell from the cliff,

With the ambulance down in the valley.
Said one, to his pleas, "It's marvel to me
That you'd give so much greater attention
To repairing results than to curing the cause;

You had much better aim at prevention.
For the mischief, of course, should be stopped at its source;

Come, neighbours and friends, let us rally.
It is far better sense to rely on a fence
Than an ambulance down in the valley."

"He is wrong in his head," the majority said;
"He would end all our earnest endeavour.
He's a man who would shirk this responsible work,
But we will support it forever.

Aren't we picking up all, just as fast as they fall,
And giving them care liberally?
A superfluous fence is of no consequence,
If the ambulance works in the valley."

The story looks queer as we've written it here,
But things oft occur that are stranger.
More humane, we assert, than to succour the hurt

Is the plan of removing the danger.
The best possible course is to safeguard the source
By attending to things rationally.
Yes, build up the fence and let us dispense
With the ambulance down in the valley.

That's the principle BOB BYRD has followed throughout his brilliant career in the Senate. He's a Senator for the ages, and it's an extraordinary honor and privilege to know him, to serve with him, and to learn from him.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I will soon have been here 34 years. That is not very long compared to the man about whom I rise to say a few words. I understand this was the day. I was in my office and, having heard the eloquence that was spoken today to my good friend, Senator BYRD, I figured that I couldn't do him justice just coming down at this very moment, as I am.

But everybody knows why we speak today when we attempt to honor him for his devotion to his colleagues, to the institution, to the Constitution, and to the United States of America.

The distinguished Senator knows what each of us thinks of him. He knows, better than we each do, what we think of him. He could tell me what PETE DOMENICI thinks about BOB BYRD, and probably be close to right. And vice versa. He has occasionally spoken about what he thinks of me. I don't think he takes it lightly. I think what he says he means. He has been far too generous in what he has said. But I will choose, among all the things, for just a moment, to say what I think mostly about him, as I think about his time here and reverse it.

First, there is something about learning to appreciate what the Senate is as a place, as a house, as an institution. Woe be it any man or woman who is elected to this place and who serves for any length of time and doesn't feel it, doesn't understand it, doesn't quite grasp what a rare place this Senate is. It is hard to say why it is. One could talk about the men and women who made it like this. We could talk about the rules of the Senate that made it like this. We could talk about the two or three great qualities, the fact that you can offer amendments freely—which has been known as one of those real attributes of this place. You can come down here on an afternoon while something is being debated on health, and if you can get the floor you can offer an amendment about Iraq. Somehow or another, you get the feel of the place, the limitation on trying to get things done that this threat to filibuster offers, and how that plays, and the minority and majority and what it means in this place.

You know at some point in time if you have ever had to make a decision on the floor of the Senate that was important just because it was important to the Senate, then ROBERT BYRD would be there to stand up and congratulate you. That is, if as chairman of the Budget Committee I had to get up and say to the Senate: I want to ad-

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First, there is something about learning to appreciate what the Senate is as a place, as a house, as an institution. Woe be it any man or woman who is elected to this place and who serves for any length of time and doesn't feel it, doesn't understand it, doesn't quite grasp what a rare place this Senate is. It is hard to say why it is. One could talk about the men and women who made it like this. We could talk about the rules of the Senate that made it like this. We could talk about the two or three great qualities, the fact that you can offer amendments freely—which has been known as one of those real attributes of this place. You can come down here on an afternoon while something is being debated on health, and if you can get the floor you can offer an amendment about Iraq. Somehow or another, you get the feel of the place, the limitation on trying to get things done that this threat to filibuster offers, and how that plays, and the minority and majority and what it means in this place.

You know at some point in time if you have ever had to make a decision on the floor of the Senate that was important just because it was important to the Senate, then ROBERT BYRD would be there to stand up and congratulate you. That is, if as chairman of the Budget Committee I had to get up and say to the Senate: I want to ad-

monish you that if you do this or that you are challenging the rules of the Senate—if I would look around and expect some help, the walls would give me help. And it would be ROBERT BYRD saying: Listen carefully, if you are talking about the Senate.

That is why I came here because, of all the qualities, I think he will best be known as a man of the Senate, as a man who understood the Senate—what made it great and different, unique. He is noted for his great ability to manifest so many great historic concepts, of modern times and ancient times, and today debate them, deliver them, state them from memory, and truly inform us what they mean.

His understanding of freedom is legendary, what American freedom is. But today I chose to congratulate him for not letting up, in all his years—never letting up on the proposition that the Senate is a special place. He will go down in history because he has regularly, habitually, without hesitation informed us of what a special place the Senate is by virtue of what we have been given, what was bestowed upon us in the Constitution, how our Founding Fathers have accredited this place, what its rules have become through its leaders of the past, and how the halls just reek with all of that past and just keep making it the Senate.

That is what he is; that is what he has done. He is the Senate. The longer he is here, the more he is that. I don't know how many years it took him to become it, to know it, to relish it as he has passed it on to each of us. Certainly, by the time I came in 1972, and I have been here 33 going on 34 years, he already was there and was preaching that to all of us. Some of us began to understand it to where we could stand up and say: Hey, don't forget, fellow Senators, this is the Senate. Let's not do an injustice to it. Let's not violate it.

I won't state names, but I remember very young Senators who wouldn't think of talking that way. But 10 years later, that is the way they talked, that is the way they behaved. I venture to say each and every one who comes to my mind, if you ask them where they got that feeling, that rapture for this place, probably among the very few things they would mention, they would mention ROBERT C. BYRD.

Congratulations for all the times spent in breaking all the records for the time, but most of all congratulations from me, to a Senate man, a man who makes the Senate what it is and likes to tell everybody else around what it is, and in particular likes to make sure Senators grow up and begin to relish it as he has, and never forgets what it is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I first came to the U.S. Senate 40 years ago next year, not as a Senator but as

a legislative assistant. Senator KENNEDY was here then in his second term. Senator BYRD had been in the Congress since 1953. I was working for Howard Baker, the first Republican Senator to be elected from Tennessee.

I noticed over the years how he and Senator BYRD became good friends. The strength of that friendship was demonstrated in 1980 when the Republicans gained control of the Senate—which surprised virtually everyone, gaining 12 seats. Among the shocks that would occur is that Howard Baker, who was then the Republican leader—he refused to call himself the minority leader, but the Republican leader—was to become majority leader and ROBERT BYRD, who was the Democratic leader, would have to be the minority leader.

I remember two stories Senator Baker tells about that incident which had a lot to do with shaping what happened in the Senate shortly after that.

Senator Baker went to see Senator BYRD, and as I have been told, he said: BOB, I wonder if you would be willing to keep your office. Well, that got him off to a good start with BOB BYRD. I am sure that incident must have caused the Senate to work much more smoothly over the next few years. Senator Baker kept the minority leader's office and expanded it, and Senator BYRD kept the majority leader's office even though he was the minority leader.

But the second thing that happened was this: The new majority leader, Howard Baker, said to the stepping down majority leader, BOB BYRD: BOB, I would like to make an arrangement with you. Senator BYRD said to Senator Baker: What is that, Howard? He said: I would like to make an arrangement about surprises. I will not surprise you if you won't surprise me. According to Senator Baker, Senator BYRD replied: Let me think about it. They got back together the next day, and BOB BYRD gave Howard Baker his word: No surprises. According to Senator Baker, that word was never broken during the entire time Senator Baker was the majority leader and Senator BYRD was the minority leader. I am sure the Senate and this country benefitted greatly because of the trust those two men, who usually had very different opinions on issues, had with one another.

The other thing I would like to say about Senator BYRD is this: I came to the U.S. Senate as a Senator many years later, the same year the Presiding Officer came from Texas. It was in 2003 when we were sworn in, and that was exactly a half century after BOB BYRD came to the Congress. Each of us in our class made what I believe we still call maiden speeches—our first speech on the subject that was most important to us. The subject that was most important to me—and still is—is what it means to be an American, concepts that unify our country. I find it absolutely remarkable how our country, among all others, has accumulated

this magnificent diversity but has found a way to bind it into a single country based on a few fragile principles that are found in our founding documents and by our common language and by our saga of American history.

There is no one in the Senate—even though many of us try—no one in the Senate who understands and expresses that better than Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. He understands what it means to be an American. He votes that way. For example, when the No Child Left Behind Act came up in the Senate before I was elected to this body, the legislation focused on reading and math. Senator BYRD insisted that the Senate bill include a \$100 million authorization for the teaching of what he called traditional American history. Our seniors in high school are scoring lower on U.S. history than on any other subject. In other words, our high school seniors don't score lowest on math or science; they score lowest on U.S. history. Those are the worst scores our seniors have. In focusing on the need to do a better job of teaching history to young Americans, Senator BYRD is making an effort to make sure we remember where our country came from.

When I made my maiden speech and then introduced a modest bill to try to create summer academies for outstanding teachers and students of American history in 2003, Senator BYRD came to the floor. Senator BYRD cosponsored the bill, and then he showed the great compliment to me of showing up at the hearing before the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to testify for the bill. As I said, it was my first year in the Senate; it was his 50th year in Congress.

So I congratulate him for his service. I congratulate him for his relationship with other Senators, his word being his bond, as it was in the example with Senator Baker, and I admire his work in helping to remind us in this body and all of us in this country of what it means to be an American. That will be one of his lasting legacies.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I cannot be in the Chamber on this somewhat historic day without recognizing the fact that one of our colleagues today becomes the longest serving Member of the U.S. Senate. Senator BOB BYRD is a special Member of this body and has been a good friend to all 99 current Members, as well as all the previous Members of the Senate who have had the pleasure of serving with him.

I will never forget the first week I was here making my rounds of the other Senators I did not know. When I came to Senator BYRD, he, of course, knew immediately who I was and engaged in a conversation about some facts regarding my service in the House and some other issues that were personal that let me know how much he cared about the Senate by taking the

time to research the background of individuals who become Members of the Senate.

I will always cherish the fact that during that conversation and in subsequent conversations I have had with him, he shared with me the fact that his favorite Member of the Senate has always been Senator Richard B. Russell of my home State. Senator Russell served in this body for 34 years, and I happen to hold the class of the seat of Senator Russell. I have an office in the Senate Russell Building. So I have a number of ties to Senator Russell, and I also have such great respect and admiration for him. To hear Senator BYRD talk in such glowing terms about a man from my State for whom I have such respect gave me a warm feeling about this man with whom I was about to engage in service in the Senate.

He is a remarkable man. He is a man who, without question, believes in the Constitution of the United States and thinks we ought to be more bold in our adherence to that Constitution.

In that respect, again, in that same first week I was here, I received in my office mail a copy of the U.S. Constitution from Senator BYRD, along with a letter from him saying that as a Member of the Senate, I should always remember that this has been our guiding light and has served us well during every single day that our country has been free and democratic.

As we help share and celebrate with him on this historic day, I extend my congratulations to him on his service to our country and his service in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, before the distinguished Senator departs, I thank him for his kind remarks and thank him for his service on the Armed Services Committee.

He mentioned Richard Russell. Indeed, he had many years of service on the Armed Services Committee. I know he would be very proud of what Senator CHAMBLISS has done to carry on the traditions which he instituted.

I earlier shared my respect for ROBERT BYRD and that great class of Senators with whom he worked in this institution, among them Harry F. Byrd, Sr., Richard B. Russell, and John Stennis. They were quite a team, and we have all learned from them. I must say, Senator CHAMBLISS carries on those traditions with his great State.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I congratulate my good friend, ROBERT C. BYRD, on becoming the longest serving Senator in American history. Senator BYRD is an institution within this institution that we all dearly love. For more than 47 years in the Senate, he has served America and his beloved West Virginia with firm purpose, confident that his work is to do their work. He has done it extraordinarily well.

Senator BYRD's place in history was assured long before this milestone. He is distinguished more by his love for

the Senate than by the length of his service. Senator BYRD knows the history and rules of the Senate better than any of us serving today—perhaps better than anyone who has ever served this body. He has defended the traditions and prerogatives of the Senate as strongly as any Senator ever has. Senator BYRD reveres our Constitution, a copy of which he always carries in his pocket, and is as firmly committed to our Constitution as any American ever has been.

To just give one example, I saw that commitment in our work together against the line-item veto, which Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law in 1996. In the floor consideration of that bill, Senator BYRD illuminated the debate, as he so often does, by reaching back into history. He quoted the 18th century English jurist, Sir William Blackstone, who wrote:

In all tyrannical governments, the supreme magistracy, or the right of both making and enforcing the laws, is vested in one and the same man, or one and the same body of men. And wherever these two powers are united together, there can be no public liberty.

After the bill became law, despite that opposition, I joined Senator BYRD and Senator Moynihan in filing an amicus brief at the Supreme Court, arguing that the line-item veto was an unconstitutional surrender of legislative power to the executive branch. In June 1998, the Supreme Court agreed in a 6-to-3 decision. Senator BYRD came to the Senate floor, and he declared:

This is a great day for the United States of America, a great day for the Constitution of the United States. Today we feel that the liberties of the American people have been assured. God save this honorable Court.

Well, we are honored to have this giant in the Senate—a true living legend—among us and guiding us in our daily work.

The determination with which Senator BYRD approaches his work in Washington is born of his devotion to the people of West Virginia.

Through his arduous work, he has brought needed infrastructure to an area that has lacked for economic development. He has fought, first and foremost, for the working people and particularly the coal miners of West Virginia. Just last week—I guess the week before now—the Senate passed the mine safety bill that he championed along with his colleague, Senator ROCKEFELLER. West Virginia has had no finer advocate in its history than ROBERT BYRD, a fact the State recognized when it selected him “West Virginian of the 20th century.”

In addition to his service in the Senate, Senator BYRD has lived, and hopefully will continue to lead for many years, an amazing and an amazingly full life. He is a man of great abilities and many passions. He plays the fiddle, he reads the classics, he is a master orator, he has worked as a butcher and welder, he is a writer and historian, he

has lived in a shack with no electricity, and now keeps the company of Presidents and of Kings.

He has known true and deep love with his cherished wife Erma whose birthday they would have celebrated today. His life and his love for the Senate and for the Constitution is exceeded only by his love for Erma.

When I was elected to the Senate in 1978, ROBERT BYRD was majority leader. The first vote I cast was on a Robert Byrd motion. And since that day, I have learned more about this institution from ROBERT BYRD than I have from anyone or from anywhere else. The greatest tribute we can pay to ROBERT BYRD is to stand firm for Senate procedures which have made the Senate the most notable place in the world of democratic institutions where the protection of minority rights to debate and to amend legislation are the most protected. There is no other place like the Senate in the world. It is here where the right to debate is given a privileged position, a protected position so that minority views can be aired fully and so that, hopefully, consensus can be arrived at rather than just simply adopted by prompt majority votes.

So that is the tribute we can all pay to ROBERT BYRD: to defend this institution, to stand for its procedures, and to carry, as he does, at least in our hearts, the Constitution, as he carries the Constitution on his body.

Congratulations to Senator BYRD on this historic milestone in his lifetime of service to our Nation and his now record length of service to the Senate of the United States.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to pay my personal tribute and the tribute of all Georgians to the service of ROBERT BYRD in the U.S. Senate. Today marks the 48th year of his service, and now, today, he is the longest serving U.S. Senator in history.

I am distinctly honored to be in Senate and to have been elected here, and there are many reasons why I am honored. But one of the most wonderful experiences since my election has been the chance to come to know ROBERT BYRD. He, obviously, is a legend. He, obviously, is a great orator. But he is also a wonderful human being.

On Fridays it is my occasion to preside over the U.S. Senate for 3 hours. As the other Members of the Senate know, on Friday mornings we are not always in business. Therefore, Friday is the day where a lot of Members come to make speeches about issues of importance to them and their constituents.

On occasion, I have had the chance to hear ROBERT BYRD make one of his famous Friday morning speeches, probably the most enjoyable of which took place three Fridays ago when I was presiding over the Senate. Senator BYRD arrived in the Chamber, asked for recognition, and then spoke, basically without notes, for 48 minutes. I remember counting the minutes because I did

not want it to be over because he gave his famous Mother's Day speech. He paid tribute to his mom and all moms in the United States of America.

ROBERT BYRD is a wonderful, unique institution, a man of great honor, great intellect, and great capacity.

One of my other great experiences since coming to the Senate has been to work with him on the bill we recently passed and is now on the President's desk, the mine safety bill. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Occupational Safety, it fell my lot to deal with the tragedies of the Sago mine disaster and subsequent disasters that took place in Kentucky.

Obviously, the Sago mine is in West Virginia, and I traveled to West Virginia and met with those mine families. But I also met with ROBERT BYRD on numerous occasions, talking about what we as the U.S. Senate could do to try to see to it that we reacted to where there might be shortcomings in the mine safety laws and to help institutionalize better practices not only in our inspections but in the operations of those mines.

With all the energy of a teenager, love and compassion for those widows, and with great effort on his own part, Senator BYRD worked closely with us over the last 6 months since that disaster, and a couple weeks ago we passed in this body—and the House passed 2 days later—the mine safety bill.

Today, mining is a safer profession because of ROBERT BYRD and his compassionate love for the people of West Virginia and the coal miners who work there.

I could go on and on telling personal stories, but I will not do that. I simply close by saying, of all the great distinctions and honors I have had to serve in this body, none is greater than to get to know the great man of great capacity and great compassion, the honorable ROBERT BYRD from the State of West Virginia—now the longest serving Senator in the history of the U.S. Senate.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD).

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, on January 3, 1959, ROBERT CARLYLE BYRD entered his first term as West Virginia's junior Senator. Today, June 12, 2006, after serving 17,327 days representing West Virginians, ROBERT C. BYRD is now the longest serving U.S. Senator in our Nation's great history. He has surpassed giants and legends of the Senate to be in a class by himself. Although his 47 plus years and 17,666 votes are what we celebrate today, we also know that he is just as much West Virginia's future as he has been part of its past.

During his tenure, Senator BYRD has brought over \$1 billion to West Virginia's highways, dams, educational institutions, and more—earning him the moniker of West Virginia's billion-dollar industry. Senator BYRD has also

created a number of other health care and educational opportunities across the State such as the Robert C. Byrd Center for Rural Health, based at Marshall University, the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center at West Virginia University, and the Scholastic Recognition Award for West Virginia's public and private school valedictorians. Senator BYRD's projects are so numerous it would take me hours to name them all; however, the improvements he has brought to West Virginia are immeasurable. And West Virginia's future is much brighter as a result of his years of service and his continued desire to work for our State.

His dedication to the people of West Virginia is unmatched, and in the years to come, we all look to Senator BYRD to continue to fight for a State that would have much less without him. Today he is working to secure a Federal prison in McDowell County, continuing to improve our State's highways, updating the safety laws for our miners, protecting the checks and balances in our government structure, securing our borders, and creating opportunities for the youth of West Virginia.

Sadly, this year, Senator BYRD lost a pillar of strength and the most beloved person in his life—his wife Erma Ora Byrd. When Senator BYRD earned his law degree while serving in Congress, Erma and his children sacrificed time with him for the betterment of our Nation. Erma served as a spiritual companion and as an emotional support for him. When elected as Majority Leader, many said that his life was the Senate, but those who know him, know that the love of his life and his eternal companion truly was Erma. Her values and strengths are those of all West Virginians. She was a coal miner's daughter and a daughter of Appalachia. She provided Senator BYRD with everything he needed throughout his life, and provided unfailing support during his lifetime of public service.

Senator BYRD's love for West Virginia and its people is extraordinary. Throughout his unprecedented public service in the West Virginia House of Delegates, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate, ROBERT C. BYRD has never lost an election—a tribute to his resounding support in our State of West Virginia and something very few of his colleagues can say. One reason for this perfect record is that he never fails to work for the future of our State—he is on the cutting edge of West Virginia's needs, and he is fast to respond to new problems, such as border security, and homeland security, with new solutions.

Senator BYRD's contributions to this country extend far past West Virginia's mountains. He has served as a leader on the Senate Appropriations Committee, worked to create a Federal compensation system for black lung victims, worked to secure passage of the Panama Canal treaties, led the effort to pass legislation keeping the So-

cial Security system solvent, worked to ratify the INF treaty with the Soviet Union, went to court to block the recently passed line-item veto, among many other historic pieces of legislation, treaties, nominations, and resolutions. Most recently, Senator BYRD has worked tirelessly to help pass the MINER Act in light of the tragedies at the Sago and Alma mines.

In addition to his stellar legislative record, Senator BYRD has been a proven leader in the Senate, holding more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Senator of any party in Senate history. He has held leadership positions including secretary of the Democratic Conference, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Democratic whip, Democratic leader, majority leader, and minority leader. On three occasions Senator ROBERT C. BYRD has served as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, demonstrating the tremendous amount of respect that the Senator has from his colleagues and placing him in direct line of succession to the Presidency.

Throughout his career, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD has remained a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend. A man of deep faith, his dedication to our country and our State is exceeded only by his dedication to his family. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Senator ROBERT C. BYRD for the incredible amount of time and effort he has given to our Nation and to the State of West Virginia. I know my colleagues join me in hoping that he will continue to serve West Virginia for many more years to come. ●

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I want to add my voice in tribute and recognition of the continuing service of our distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD. Today he becomes the real dean of the Senate, the longest serving of all the 1,855 men and women who have served in this body.

It will not surprise any of my colleagues that others will make more of this remarkable milestone than the Senator from West Virginia himself. For him, Day 17,327 is just another day serving the people of West Virginia and the United States here in the Senate. But for the rest of us, this milestone recognizes not simply the length of Senator BYRD's tenure, but what he has done with that tenure.

The Senator from West Virginia brings a sense of history and perspective to the politics of the moment. He is as determined as anyone here to achieve his political goals, but his emphasis on the institution's history and prerogatives helps us place the immediate in a larger context. In that sense, he is not just a Senator, not just a colleague, but he is a teacher for the many Senators who have walked on this floor for the first time since he came here so long ago.

The Senator from West Virginia is truly an original. I ask my colleagues:

do you know anyone else who feels equally comfortable, giving a discourse on the Roman Senate and appearing on the television show "Hee Haw"?

Many Senators, for example, receive academic degrees during their service in this body. Most, however, are honorary degrees. The Senator from West Virginia received a law degree from American University in 1963, but he earned it after taking night classes for a decade.

Senators have written books during their service in this body. The Senator from West Virginia, however, has written books about this body. He is widely known as the author of a four-volume work on the history of the U.S. Senate, published in 1987 for the Senate's bicentennial. Those are not simply history books. The project began as a series of speeches about this institution and its history, delivered right here on this Senate floor. A book about Senate history arising while participating in that history.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Inside the front cover of volume two of his work on the Senate is a photograph of the Senator from West Virginia and his wife, whom he has so often simply called "my dear Erma," standing on a staircase in the Senate. We all mourned Erma Byrd's passing just a few months ago and today would have been her birthday. That photograph was on the occasion of their 50th anniversary in 1987. I do not doubt that in his left breast pocket was that familiar copy of the U.S. Constitution which, I might add, was celebrating its own bicentennial that same year. How fitting that one photograph would capture these loves of his life, the institutions to which he was so committed: his marriage, the Constitution, and the Senate.

So much more could be said, but I just want to pay tribute and honor to my colleague of nearly 30 years, a man of character and integrity, a caring man passionately devoted to his faith, his family, and his country, a good man, a great Senator.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Senate's most enduring figure, Senator ROBERT BYRD, of West Virginia. Today marks the day that Senator BYRD becomes the longest serving member in the history of the U.S. Senate, with almost 50 years of senatorial experience. I extend to Senator BYRD my congratulations on this momentous occasion.

Born in 1917, Senator BYRD had a hardscrabble childhood. After the death of his parents when Senator BYRD was just 1 year old, he was raised by his aunt and uncle in various communities in West Virginia. He graduated at the top of his high school class in the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression. Taking work wherever he was able to find it, Senator BYRD pumped gas, sold produce, and cut meat. These jobs grounded Senator BYRD in the realities of the working world. During World War II, he became

a welder and worked on the Liberty and Victory ships.

After the war, Senator BYRD began his political life with a successful run for the West Virginia House of Delegates. After serving two terms, Senator BYRD was elected to the West Virginia Senate, then to the U.S. House of Representatives. Finally, in 1958, Senator BYRD was elected to the U.S. Senate. He has subsequently been reelected by large margins again and again. In numerous elections, he has carried all 55 counties in West Virginia and in 2000 carried nearly every precinct in the State, an unheard of achievement. Additionally, Senator BYRD has held more positions in the Senate leadership than any other Senator in the history of the institution, including 12 years as Democratic Leader.

While outside of the Senate Chamber, Senator BYRD became the first member to initiate and complete the courses needed for a law degree while simultaneously serving in Congress by taking night classes from American University over the course of 10 years. In May 2001, Senator BYRD was named "West Virginian of the 20th Century" by Gov. Bob Wise and both houses of the West Virginia Legislature. He is also blessed with two daughters, six grandchildren, and five-great granddaughters.

I am pleased to recognize my colleague, Senator BYRD, on this historic day. The work he has done throughout his life has bestowed countless benefits to the people of West Virginia and to the Nation. It is a pleasure to work with such a creative and dedicated lawmaker, and I once again congratulate Senator BYRD on reaching this milestone.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate my longtime friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, on his landmark accomplishment of becoming the longest serving member of the U.S. Senate. Today is Senator BYRD's 17,327th day in office—that is 48 years. And he is still going strong—gearing up for his race for a ninth term this fall.

Senator BYRD's life shows the power of America's unique opportunity structure. His mother died when he was a baby. He was raised by his aunt and uncle, a coal miner, during the Great Depression. In his early life, he worked pumping gas, cutting meat, and even welding war ships in various ports—including in my own hometown of Baltimore. Yet Senator BYRD never forgot his roots, and he never forgot those miners. In fact, his new mine safety legislation—the MINER Act—just passed the Senate last week. Like me, he stands up for the little guy.

Senator BYRD and I have a long history together. When I first came to the Senate in 1986, one of the people who was most welcoming to me was Senator BYRD. I reached out to him. I told him I not only wanted to be a fighter—I wanted to be an effective player. I wanted to be there not only to change the law books. I wanted to be sure

there was money in the Federal checkbook for my State and for the national priorities that would help ordinary families. ROBERT BYRD said to me, "You should come on my Appropriations Committee."

Senator BYRD helped me become the first woman on the Appropriations Committee and one of the first freshman members of the Senate on the Appropriations Committee. With Senator BYRD as the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and I as a member, we have been working together ever since to build coalitions to get things done.

Senator BYRD's home State of West Virginia is right next door to Maryland. We share a common border—with Allegheny, Garret, and parts of Washington Counties just across the State line in Western Maryland. But we share more than a common border. We share a common set of values—rooted in faith, family commitment and patriotism.

Senator BYRD is no stranger to breaking records. He has done this before. He has already cast more votes and held more leadership positions—including serving as minority leader for 6 years and serving two stints as President pro tempore—than any other U.S. Senator in history. Today's record is further evidence of Senator BYRD's unwavering dedication to his State. When asked about this accomplishment, Senator BYRD told the press: "Records are fine. But what's important is what I do for the people of West Virginia. They are the ones who sent me here 48 years ago." It is this dedication that keeps the people of West Virginia voting for Senator BYRD. I like to say that I am the "Senator from Maryland and for Maryland," and it is this kind of shared value that makes me feel so close to Senator BYRD.

So today—June 12, 2006—we congratulate Senator ROBERT C. BYRD for his historic contributions to his State and to our Nation.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a longtime friend and colleague, the esteemed senior Senator from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT BYRD. This is a historic day in his career and a historic day in the history of the Senate. Today Senator BYRD adds to his many accomplishments and honors the distinction of becoming the longest-serving Member in Senate history.

Senator BYRD's years of service to this country are an inspiration to all of us. His lifelong devotion to the institution of the Senate sets an example that we can only try to emulate. For almost half a century, he has been a tireless advocate for the people of West Virginia and the Nation. He believes that government can improve the lives of the citizens that it serves, and that we can all be advocates for justice. We are better Senators and better citizens when we attempt to live up to the legacy that he has established.

I first worked with Senator BYRD during the early days of my husband's

administration. At the time, he had already served in the Senate for 34 years. I remember him being stately and silver-haired when we met. He was already the unofficial historian of the Senate, famous for standing in the well of the Chamber and dazzling his colleagues with quotations from the classics. I also learned then that he was a strict disciplinarian when it came to procedural rules and decorum, a quality that he retains to this day.

It is his devotion to the institution of the Senate that has made him a mentor to so many of us, and I am honored to include myself among the ranks of those who he has counseled.

When I was elected to the Senate, it took me only a minute to conclude that I should start my preparation by going to see the great sage and historian of the Senate, Senator BYRD.

To this day I still very fondly remember the visit that I paid to Senator BYRD's office in the Capitol in late November of 2000. I will be forever indebted to him for the guidance that he provided when I first came to the Senate.

Of course, I am not the only recipient of his kind advice and guidance. In fact, Senator BYRD has codified his vast knowledge of the history of the Senate into a multi-volume book. The four volumes published in 1989, 1991, 1993 and finally in 1995 were a labor of love for Senator BYRD. They will continue to be a resource and a treasure for many generations to come.

And let me tell you what Senator ROBERT BYRD did for the people of New York in the aftermath of the attack on lower Manhattan in 2001.

After that terrible day, the White House sent up a supplemental spending bill to finance the war, and there was not a single penny in it for New York. I told the President of the United States in the Oval Office that we were going to need at least \$20 billion to rebuild Ground Zero.

And thanks to the leadership and dedication of Senator BYRD, who chaired the Appropriations Committee at that time, we got that funding for New York. Thanks to his commitment, our firefighters, police officers, first responders, and volunteers who came to the rescue that day will have some help as they continue to cope with the health effects of exposure to the site.

Because of Senator BYRD's efforts, where once a pile of rubble stood, one day a tower will stand.

Because of Senator BYRD, our businesses and homeowners who lost everything are on the road to recovery.

As Senator BYRD has himself said, New York gained a third Senator on that day, and we are unquestionably better off for it.

ROBERT BYRD was born in North Wilkesboro, NC, and raised in West Virginia by his aunt and uncle. He is an avid fiddler, steeped in the rich musical traditions of the Appalachian folk life. He grew up in the coal mining community that he proudly defends

today. As a member of the HELP Committee, I continue to be impressed by his vigilance on behalf of the coal miners of West Virginia and elsewhere in the Nation.

He was first elected to this Senate in 1958. He became a member of the Senate leadership in 1967, when he was selected to be secretary of the Democratic Conference. He was chosen to be Senate Democratic whip in 1971 and Democratic leader in 1977. He has held more leadership positions in the Senate than any other Member in Senate history.

Through all of his years of Senate service, there was one person who was always by his side, as his partner, friend, and as he said on many occasions, his teacher.

Erma Ora James was born in Floyd County, VA, and moved from there to the coal mines of West Virginia with her family. It was there that she met ROBERT BYRD at Mark Twain High School over 70 years ago. He first tried to woo her with gifts of bubble gum that he took from a classmate and stored up for her. And apparently it worked, because they became high school sweethearts and were married on May 29, 1937. Over the years, their family grew to include two daughters, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

It is a tradition of Senator BYRD's to go to the floor of the Senate each Mother's Day and pay tribute to the Nation's mothers. When he does that he has often mentioned Erma and the joy that they shared together for so many years.

They had been married nearly 69 years when she passed away 3 months ago on March 15, 2006, after a long illness. Theirs has been called one of the great American love stories.

On his 63rd wedding anniversary he went to the Senate floor and said of her, "I have to frankly say that what little I have amounted, if it is anything much, I owe for the most part to [Erma.]" I know that today, as his colleagues who respect and admire him so very much come to the floor to praise his service in the Senate, Erma is looking down on us as well.

It is truly an honor to serve in the Senate with Senator BYRD. I wish him all the best on this day and I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of the American people.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOND). Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 3 o'clock having arrived, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 2766, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2766) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we are now on the bill. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent if I may depart from the bill to speak as if in morning business regarding our distinguished colleague, Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER are printed in the RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, to accommodate Members, we will be on the bill for some period of time. I will be joined by the distinguished ranking member, Mr. LEVIN, shortly after 5 o'clock today. In the meantime, we are open for statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I appreciate this.

I rise today to discuss several noteworthy provisions in the fiscal year 2007 Defense authorization bill. I will provide an overview of a couple of amendments I will offer.

First, I commend the managers of this bill, Senators JOHN WARNER and CARL LEVIN, for the work they have put into this legislation. I also recognize in a public way the fine work Chairman WARNER has done. I have had an opportunity to work with the chairman both as a member of the Committee on Armed Services, and after leaving that committee to serve on the Committee on Appropriations. I found Senator WARNER certainly has been very gracious and helpful on many issues and has certainly kept the men and women of the Armed Forces primary in his mind.

It is comprehensive and addresses many of the issues important to our Armed Forces. Indeed, many of the provisions in this bill are essential to the health and well being of our soldiers and are needed in order to defeat terrorism and defend our Nation from future attacks.

In the missile defense arena, for example, the Senate Armed Services Committee took several steps to encourage the Department of Defense to focus on near-term missile defense systems over longer-term next generation